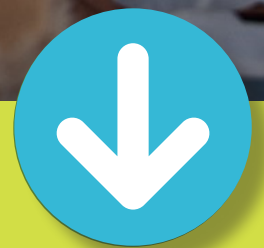


Customer  
Annual Review  
2016/2017

Building  
a better  
tomorrow





## What this report is about

This review highlights North Hertfordshire Homes' achievements in 2016/2017.

We are extremely grateful to the customers who responded to our online survey and helped develop this review.

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# A message from Gavin Cansfield, Chief Executive

We know that many of our customers face financial difficulties, struggling to keep a home, and that many more people can't even get on the housing ladder. We are really proud of what we do and the value of social housing.

Having somewhere to settle, even temporarily, helps transform people's lives, whatever stage of life they are in. This is what we have always done – we've helped people who need temporary accommodation, a new start in life and older people looking for extra support and care.

Right now we are focused on two things:

- Taking out the effort: we know that you want services that are simple and straightforward, we need to work tirelessly to make that happen
- Putting back the trust: as a customer you need to be able to trust us as your landlord to provide you with safe and secure housing. To do what we say, when we say we will do it.

Sometimes having somewhere to live isn't enough. We have also been doing work to understand issues of loneliness amongst tenants and how we can provide help with securing employment. The majority of our customers won't need this help, so we are targeting our efforts where we know they can have the most impact.



Looking at the year ahead we can be confident that as a well-run locally based housing association we are in a strong position to continue to provide much-needed services, invest in existing homes and deliver the much-needed homes for people who are otherwise locked out of the housing market.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light green background.

Gavin Cansfield,  
Chief Executive



# Our plans for the next three years



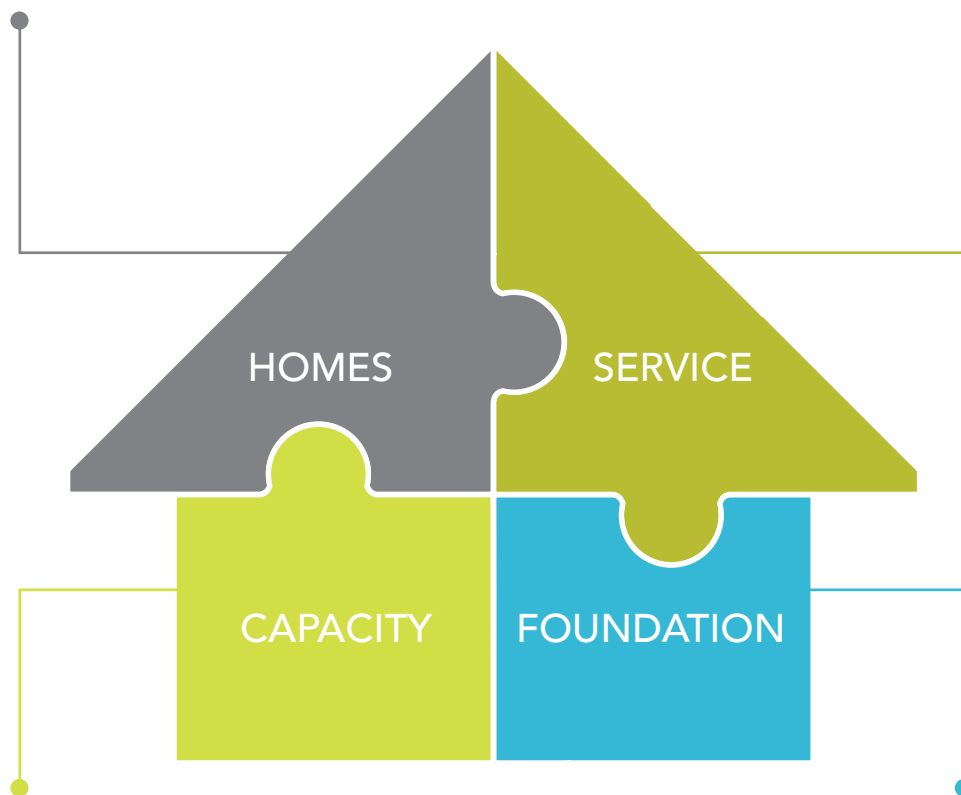
We have a three year plan, 'Building a better tomorrow', which outlines what we'll focus on over the next three years including providing good services for existing and future customers.

## DELIVERING HOMES

Build a minimum of 480 homes, ensuring 66% of these are affordable.

## GOOD SERVICES

Provide good services that are easy to access and simple to use.



## CREATING CAPACITY

Ensuring we manage our income so that we can invest in our properties and build new homes.

## A SOLID FOUNDATION

Establishing a strong business that is run efficiently and effectively.

# Highlights from 2016/2017



Over **88,000** calls handled by our Contact Centre



**£70,000** per year ongoing income from renting out our Hitchin office



**81** homes built: **25** homes for affordable rent, **17** homes for shared ownership and **34** homes for future market sale



**£2 million** spent on improving homes



**£95,300** investment in partnerships with other organisations who can support our customers



**£500,000** spent on social purpose projects



**21** market sale homes sold, making a profit of over **£1.5 million** to fund more affordable homes



**£1.27 million** saved by controlling costs and efficiencies



**47%** increase in the use of our website



**40%** of customers registered to use online accounts



**1600** customers involved in giving feedback



“ We work closely with the fire brigade to ensure our plans for fire safety remain up to date and effective. We conduct regular planned checks to make sure we understand the buildings we own and manage, and how they would act in case of a fire. ”

Liz Dunn  
Head of Compliance,  
Investments and Assets



## Your home

We are committed to ensuring that our customers' homes are safe. Some of this is statutory, for example our landlord annual gas safety check. We have conducted fire risk assessments within all our blocks and conduct regular planned checks to make sure we understand the buildings we own and manage and how they would act in case of a fire.

**£2 million**

invested in improving the condition and sustainability of our homes and neighbourhoods in 2016/2017.

**£230,000** to enable customers to keep living as independently as possible, we work with partner agencies to adapt homes or install aids to make life at home easier.

Last year we carried out stock condition surveys across nearly **1800** properties to help us understand where we need to invest in things like replacement boilers, roofs and windows.

## Repairs

We know how important the repairs service is to you and the value you put on it. Last year

- Total number of repairs completed **15,974**
- Repairs completed at the first visit **96.8%**
- Average number of calendar days taken to complete repairs **13**
- Average time to re-let a home **31 days**

We saw a slight increase in the average time to complete repairs last year. This was mainly due to vacancies in the team, but we've now recruited to these posts.

It's important that we're clear and consistent about letting you know what we can and can't do. We've spent time this year developing this information and it will be a priority for us to share this with you next year.



# Customer satisfaction

## Reducing effort and increasing trust

In July 2016 we launched our 'Listen2You' campaign, asking customers how we're doing and what they thought we should focus on.

This told us that what really matters to you is receiving a service you can trust and that you can easily access in a variety of ways.

From this feedback, we've developed a plan to make sure we use feedback from you, our customers, and industry experts to improve our services and the ways you access them.

In March 2017 we began two new ways of getting customer feedback:

- asking for real-time feedback. This is technology which asks for your feedback within one working day of your call to our Contact Centre.
- quarterly surveys across a selection of customers to understand how much you trust us and how easy it is to access our services.



The results of the first survey in March told us we need to improve:

- our handling of complaints
- response times to email enquiries and
- waiting times for repair appointments.

We'll get better at these things next year.

## Complaints

“ We don't always get it right and one of the things we know we need to get much better at is dealing with complaints. We focus on process, and you want it resolved. This is something we are working on and will get right. We also know there is more to do to ensure that we really understand the concerns of customers, translating that understanding into the things we do, thinking about how we do things, what we do and ensuring that you can trust us as your landlord. ”

Gavin Cansfield  
Chief Executive



## Our social purpose

We know that some households are only just getting by and a small shock, or change to their health or income might have a serious effect on the security of their home. We focus the support we provide where we know it is needed the most.

One of the ways we do this is through our Tenancy Support Team, who help customers stay in their homes by supporting them with budgeting, helping them manage debts, and increasing their income by helping them get the benefits they're entitled to.

“

I used to sit and stare out of my window and all I could see were black clouds but now I feel like this weight has been lifted from my shoulders and I can see the sun!

Mr P.

”

### Case study

Due to complications with Diabetes Mr P had a leg amputated. He was already in debt because his outgoings were more than his income, and he was very confused about who to pay first with the money he had.

Our team helped him close an unnecessary bank account, terminate an agreement for a garage he wasn't using and worked out a budget plan to pay towards rent arrears, utilities and Council Tax – the priority payments. We helped him secure ongoing Personal Independence Payments and arranged for adaptations to be made to his home. We continued to support him during a further hospital stay then organised practical support to help him at home. He now feels able to manage his finances and maintain his home independently.



£95,300 invested in social partnering schemes:

- £40,000 funding to the Citizens Advice Bureau
- £34,000 funding to Herts Young Homeless
- £21,300 funding to Families First

Nearly £500,000 spent last year on our social purpose work:

- £212,873 invested in improving fire safety across our properties
- £230,755 spent on aids and adaptations to enable independent living for those with disabilities

**We will continue to deliver social value through the following key areas over the next three years:**

## Finances

support our customers to manage their money more effectively

## Employment

helping 100 customers into employment over three years

## Loneliness

reduce the number of older people living in isolation

**Visit**

[www.nhh.org.uk](http://www.nhh.org.uk)

**Email us on**

[customer.service@nhh.org.uk](mailto:customer.service@nhh.org.uk)

**Call us on**

0330 343 0016 (Monday - Friday, 8am to 5pm)

# Tell us what you think...

How would you rate this review?

